

They live on hope. They do not come to work in blue suit. They put on work shoes and work clothes and work hard, and all they ask for is a decent return on their investment, despite the substantial risks they take. Because of that this Congress, for a long period of time, over many decades, has decided to create a safety net so that when family farmers run into a patch of trouble, this Congress and this country say: You are not alone. We want to help you through these price valleys and through these tough times.

So that safety net was significantly what we voted on today. The President began last year threatening to veto a farm bill, and consistently threatened that veto, and finally decided to exercise that veto, and the Congress said: You are wrong, Mr. President.

The President came to my State of North Dakota. He said to farmers: When you need me, I will be there. But when farmers needed him, he was not there. That is a matter of fact. This Congress has used awfully good judgment in overriding the President's veto.

About a year ago, a little over a year ago, I introduced an agriculture disaster bill here in the Congress. For 3 years in a row I have added an agriculture disaster piece to the supplemental appropriations bill because we did not have a disaster title in the farm bill. For 3 years as an appropriator I put disaster money in the Appropriations supplemental bill. Finally, on the third opportunity, we got it in a bill the President had to sign. But we had to go on bended knee when they had disasters over much of farm country to get disaster help. Now we have a farm bill that has a disaster title. That is a significant step forward.

A lot of folks do not understand much about farming. They think that Corn Flakes, oatmeal, and puffed rice come in boxes. They do not. But those who put it in the boxes make much more money than those who plow the ground and plant the seeds that produce the corn and the oats and the wheat.

Now, this is a pretty substantial day for those of us who care about family farmers and want good farm policy. This veto override is good public policy.

Rodney Nelson, a cowboy poet from North Dakota, who is a rancher and a farmer out near Almont and Judd, ND, wrote a piece. I have mentioned it before to my colleagues. But he asks this question rhetorically in his piece: What is it worth? What is it worth for a kid to know how to weld a seam, to drive a combine, to fix a tractor? What's it worth for a kid to know how to pour cement? What is it worth for a kid to know how to work livestock, work in the hot summer sun and the cold winter day? He asks: What is it worth for a kid to know how to teach a calf to drink milk out of a pail? What is it worth for a kid to know how to build a lean-to? What is it worth for a kid to know how to fix a tractor that won't run?

There is only one place in this country where all of those skills are taught, and that is on America's family farms. That is the university where all of those courses exist, and we lose it at our peril. That is why we write farm legislation. What is it worth? It is worth plenty to this country to say to family farmers during tough times: You are not alone, because we have created a farm bill to say here is a helping hand during tough times. That is what this is all about. I think the action today is something we ought to be proud of.

Is this bill everything I would have liked? No. My colleague and I, Senator GRASSLEY, offered an amendment on the floor of the Senate that was critical in terms of policy dealing with payment limits. We lost. We got 56 votes, we needed 60.

The fact is, this bill remains a good bill. It is late. It should have been done months ago. We fought through 9 or 10 months of Presidential veto threats. But it is done and finally I think farmers who are working their fields now in the spring and trying to figure out how they are going to do this year, I think farmers are going to be able to look at this bill and say: Congress cared. Congress cared enough to override the President's veto and put in place a farm bill that once again says: America cares about family farming and its future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania is recognized.

#### THINKING OF SENATOR KENNEDY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, let me say first I commend the remarks of the Senator from North Dakota who again reminds us of the importance of this legislation that we have been working on for many months now, and now having the votes, an overwhelming number of votes in the Senate to override the President's veto.

It is a bill that will help our farm families. But it is also a bill that we know from the percentage breakdown is about nutrition and conservation and so much else. So we are grateful for all of the work that went into this.

I am thinking today about not only this legislation. I want to spend a few moments talking about our veterans. But also we had an opportunity today at lunch to listen to three individuals whose stories, among others, are portrayed in a book about the Freedom Riders in the early 1960s and the impact they had on civil rights, and the courageous witness they provided is an understatement. People literally risked their lives for freedom in the South.

When I think about our veterans today, the GI bill that Senator WEBB brought to this body, and so many of us cosponsored, when I think about the GI bill, the work today on agriculture and nutrition, and also the witness provided by these speakers today at lunch who were Freedom Riders, I am, of course, thinking about Senator KEN-

NEDY who is not with us today. He is outside of Washington and we are anxiously awaiting his return.

But I was thinking, as we all are today, about him and about his health but also his presence here. Everything we did today virtually he has had an impact on for more than a generation, whether it was nutrition or whether it was helping our veterans or whether it was having the courage to stand up for civil rights. So we are thinking of him today.

#### GI BILL OF RIGHTS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wanted to make a couple of remarks about the GI bill of rights. We had an opportunity today to vote on a piece of legislation which included that. That legislation is so necessary for our veterans. I know, Mr. President, you in your State, as a former Governor and Senator, know the impact of veterans.

In Pennsylvania, we have over a million veterans, and so many of them served our country in war after war. And in this war, the war in Iraq or anywhere in the world where they serve, all they are asking us to do is to help them in a couple of very basic ways: They want our respect, which we should always provide, and I think most Americans do over and over again. But they also should have the right to an education after they have served their country. It is that simple. We all know education is often referred to as the great equalizer. Sometimes when someone comes from a disadvantaged background, they are able to lift their sights and partake in the American dream because they have an education.

If soldiers are serving in combat, men and women in uniform for America, the least we should do is provide them with an education when they come home so they can have the chance at the American dream here at home.

I think the last thing, certainly not in that order, they have a right to expect is quality health care. We have a long way to go. Despite great work by people who work in the VA, there is a long way to go to provide the kind of quality health care our veterans have a right to expect.

So when we remember on this floor the words of Abraham Lincoln a long time ago when he talked, about people who served in combat and war, he talked about caring for him who has borne the battle and his widow and his orphan. When we think about that today, caring for him or her who has borne the battle, it must mean at least those three things: our respect, quality health care, and a quality education.

That is why this bill is so important. I am grateful so many of our colleagues agree with that. But we have got a long way to go to make sure the GI bill is the law of the land, not just something to debate but the law of the land.